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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7665th meeting
Tuesday, 5 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Egypt	Mr. Mahmoud
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2016/281)

Letter dated 29 March 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/288)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2016/281)

Letter dated 29 March 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/288)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and African Integration of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/281, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali. I wish also to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/288, which contains a letter dated 29 March 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in Mali, just a short time after the important visit that the Council carried out in Mali and in the West African subregion at the beginning of the month of March. I should like also to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and African Integration of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Abdoulaye Diop. I take this opportunity to convey to him the satisfaction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the excellent cooperation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

As the members of the Security Council noted during their recent visit to Mali, and as is underscored by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/281), significant progress has been made in recent weeks in implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Carrying on from the consultative meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, held in Algiers on 18 January under the auspices of the Algerian Foreign Minister, Mr. Lamamra, the Malian authorities made official on 19 January the establishment of two new regions, Taoudenni and Ménaka. On 27 February, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita called for a meeting in Bamako with the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) and the Platform coalition of armed groups, during which the parties to the agreement announced that they had set an implementation timeline for March and April, with a focus on the establishment of interim authorities in the north, improving security conditions, cantonment and the swift implementation of the peace agreement provisions relating to preparations for local elections.

Following lengthy consultations between the Government and the signatory armed groups, which, incidentally, were expanded to civil society and political parties, on the process of the establishment of the authorities responsible for administration, municipalities, communal circles and the regions of the north during the interim period, the National Assembly adopted on 31 March a law modifying the territorial municipalities code. This was followed by the adoption of a decree on the modalities for implementation of the interim authorities in territorial municipalities.

All of these texts define the functioning of the transitional administrations, which will be composed of representatives of the Government, the CMA and the Platform, and will be limited to municipalities, communal circles and the regions of Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Taoudenni and Timbuktu. This is therefore a decisive stage that should be welcomed. It is now up to the parties to implement this law as soon as possible and to make concrete progress on implementing other important clauses of the peace agreement, in particular on defence and security matters.

In order to fully cover all of these institutional developments, I wish also to commend the appointment on 23 March, following a consultation process with

the signatory groups, of a new Governor of Kidal, Mr. Ag Ahmadou. His arrival in Kidal will symbolize a gradual return of the State Administration. I should like to assure the Council that MINUSMA will spare no effort to facilitate the full implementation of all of these measures.

Although significant measures have been taken in recent weeks, in particular the establishment of committees on integration and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); a Government allocation for the pre-cantonment of signatory armed groups; the construction of the first three pre-cantonment sites and the beginning of work this week on five others, progress in the area of security forces remains too slow, given the security challenges in the north of Mali. Almost 10 months after the signing of the agreement in May, it is urgent to quickly make the Operational Coordination Mechanism functional and, above all, to begin the joint patrols, which will play a crucial role in securing the cantonment and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, in addition to making things visible to the population. I therefore appeal to the Government and to the signatory armed groups to create the conditions required to carry out those steps. As to the armed groups themselves, I call on them to provide without delay the list of their representatives to the integration and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration commission, as well as — no less important — the list of their fighters who are to be part of the cantonment process. In that regard as well, MINUSMA will continue to play its full role in facilitating the process as part of its good-offices mandate. I therefore urge the Government and the signatory armed groups to quickly set out an implementation timetable for all pending matters set out in the peace agreement.

When I previously briefed the Security Council (see S/PV.7600), I raised the alarm with regard to the worrying security situation in Mali. Each day that passes without the peace agreement being implemented is a day gained for extremist and terrorist groups, which are betting on the failure of the peace process in Mali and are indiscriminately targeting representatives of the Malian State, signatory groups and the international forces of Operation Barkhane and MINUSMA. In that regard, I should like to pay homage to the victims of the terrible attack by terrorist groups in Kidal on 12 February. Many Guinean peacekeepers died during that attack on our camp. I also pay tribute to the victims among Mali's defence and security forces, who paid a very heavy price in the face of repeated attacks by Ansar Eddine and the Al-Mourabitoun. We should also point out, as we say almost every day, that the delay in implementing the peace agreement and the ongoing insecurity also have an impact on intercommunal conflicts, which continue to increase, especially in the areas of Gao and Mopti, with sometimes alarming consequences for the civilian population.

Beyond the commitment and political will of the Government and the signatories to speed up the implementation of the agreement — which I commend and about which I have no doubt whatever — the challenge today has to do with trust among the parties, which we must further strengthen. As such, I regret that the Kidal forum, which was initially to bring together all the signatories to the agreement and which I had the honour to attend, was ultimately transformed into an internal meeting of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad held from 28 to 30 March. However, given the conclusions of the meeting, there is hope that it paved the way for a strengthening of cohesion among the armed groups, as well as for their renewed commitment to the timely and full implementation of the peace agreement. The effective putting in place of interim authorities, which signals the return of State services in the north of the country, the launch, as I mentioned, of joint patrols and the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes should constitute a key step in the gradual restoration of basic services, including health and education, and enable the most vulnerable populations to benefit from the peace dividend they await so fervently. We encourage the Government of Mali quickly to launch the preparatory process for the national reconciliation conference provided for in the peace agreement, which should contribute to a more inclusive peace process with regard to the concerns of other forces of the Malian nation.

The combination of increased insecurity in northern Mali, but also in the central region of Mopti, and the increase in terrorism in the subregion, as seen in the attacks in Ouagadougou at the end of last year and those in Grand Bassam, in Côte d'Ivoire, in mid-March should prompt us to pay greater attention to the state of the security threat in the entire West African subregion. In that regard, we should welcome the increased efforts by the Malian armed forces, in cooperation with the armies of neighbouring countries — including Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger — as part of the regional

initiative by the group of five Sahelian countries and with the support of the French Operation Barkhane to conduct operations to reduce the influence of terrorist groups in the subregion. For its part, MINUSMA is intensely continuing its efforts for the upgrading of its contingents to increase their mobility and to further adapt their available capacities for intelligence and protection to respond to changing the threat to our facilities and all our personnel.

Faced with that threat, at a time when United Nations peacekeeping in West Africa is changing, the prevalence of terrorist groups and organized crime are latent threats to the stability of the subregion. In that regard, we are prepared to continue to explore with other actors, including the African Union, ways and means to strengthen cooperation among the countries of the subregion in terms of intelligence and border control and security, with a view to contribute to containing the expansion of the terrorist threat. I note that the efforts of the subregion have already allowed for the dismantling of some terrorist cells, as well as for the arrest by the Malian authorities of the leader of Ansar Eddine for the southern region, Souleymane Keita, as well as the bombing suspects in the attack at Grand Bassam. All of that, of couse, has been part of separate operations.

We must keep in mind that the non-permissive environment in which MINUSMA is deployed has its roots in deeper issues related to political and security governance in the West African subregion. That is why I would like to commend China's initiative, Mr. President, in organizing an open debate on April 25 on the issue of peacebuilding in West Africa, which I am certain will enable us to further consider together ways and means to respond in a more integrated and coordinated manner to all those new threats to peace and security in the subregion.

Finally, I take this opportunity to officially inform the Security Council that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has initiated a strategic review of MINUSMA. Over the next two months, we will focus on further reflections in our consultations with the Government of Mali and other partners. We will share the recommendations of the strategic review in the next report of the Secretary-General, whose publication is expected in late May, a month before the Mission's mandate comes to an end.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Minister Diop.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to express to you, Mr. President, the satisfaction of the delegation of Mali at seeing your country, the People's Republic of China, preside over the Security Council this month. China is a friend of Mali and a long-time partner, to which we wish every success and pledge our full cooperation during its presidency. At the same time, I would like to congratulate Angola, also a friend of Mali, for its outstanding leadership of the Council during the previous month, one of the highlights of which was the field visit that took place from 4 to 9 March by the 15 members of the Council, who went to Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. I welcome the positive results of the visit, and I reiterate the congratulations of my delegation to all Member States for the quality of the exchanges with all of the stakeholders in the peace process. Allow me also to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his laudable ongoing efforts on behalf of international peace and security, in particular when it comes to resolving the crisis in Mali. I also extend my gratitude to his Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), our brother and friend Mahamat Saleh Annadif, with whom the Government of Mali has a very good relationship of cooperation. We look forward to that continuing in the future.

I am also pleased to commend the efforts of Algeria, which has been leading the international mediation and is Chair of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, as well as the efforts of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, France, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Chad and the United States of America. I also thank all countries that contribute troops to MINUSMA and would like to remember the Blue Helmets who have fallen in the line of duty and all victims of the crisis in Mali.

The delegation of Mali takes note of the report (S/2016/281) of the Secretary-General under consideration and would like to thank its friend, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing and, above all, for his ongoing support for the peace efforts in Mali.

With regard to the peace process in Mali, the Security Council, as I already mentioned, carried out useful work during its field visit, as the visit allowed members to see at first-hand the progress achieved and the difficulties that remain, but also to listen and engage in an exchange with all stakeholders about their concerns and expectations. Those frank and direct interactions strengthened the conviction of the Government of Mali that it is up to the Malians themselves to take their destiny into their own hands and to commit resolutely to implementing the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali with the support of the international community.

The assurances given by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, on 6 March, at the fruitful meeting he had with members of the Security Council echoed that spirit. Members will recall that on that occasion President Keita left no shadow of a doubt with regard to the willingness and determination of the Government of Mali to fully play its role to speed up the implementation of the peace agreement in an environment rid of the spectre of terrorism, violent extremism and all forms of transnational organized crime. Similarly, during the meeting between the Government of Mali and the Security Council delegation, on 5 March, the Ministers outlined the various measures taken by their Government within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement.

Members therefore have all the information about the evolution of the peace process in my country. Nonetheless, the current meeting on the review of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Mali gives my delegation an opportunity to return to certain observations made by the Council during the meeting on the conclusions of that visit to the field, which are referred to in the current report under review. I am sure that all members noted some things during their visit. First, I am sure they noted the significant advances that have been made in the implementation of agreement, which are largely thanks to the leadership and personal efforts of the President of Mali. Secondly, I am sure that members also noted the resurgence in terrorist attacks, which are today the main obstacle to the implementation of the peace agreement. Thirdly, members also underscored the need to take into account the regional and transregional nature of the challenges that are confronting Mali. Finally, they recognized the incompatibility of MINUSMA's current mandate with its operating environment, as well as the Mission's operational shortcomings, in particular in terms of training and equipment. With regard to the last point, I would like to briefly recall that the Government of Mali, during its discussions with the Security Council delegation, outlined a series of actions whose undertaking would improve the position of MINUSMA by making it more proactive.

The recommendations of the Government of Mali were aimed at ensuring that MINUSMA operated in a more effective and efficient way and revolved around bringing together the Mission itself and the Malian defence and security forces, as well as regional initiatives, which will support all those efforts. The Malian Government's recommendations were also the subject of extensive discussions as part of the United Nations inter-agency strategic review mission for Mali, led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his appointment to that important post. The review of the quarterly report, in June 2016, to which the conclusions of this review will be appended and which has been launched for the purpose of renewing MINUSMA's mandate, will offer us an opportunity to go into greater depth about the concerns that we have about MINUSMA.

At this juncture, I would like to recall our common view that MINUSMA, despite being almost entirely up to strength in terms of troops and police, is nonetheless struggling to fully assume its role of stabilizing the country and supporting the Government of Mali for the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. Beyond the attacks targeting the civilian population and the Malian defence and security forces, the Mission itself is now the target of terrorist groups. The heavy toll of more than 80 Blue Helmets killed in just three years of the existence of the MINUSMA makes it, unfortunately, the deadliest peacekeeping operation currently. That explains why the Government of Mali believes a lot is riding on the renewal of the mandate of MINUSMA and why the mandate must take into account the current security context, which is marked by a resurgence and intensification of the terrorist threat.

The Government of Mali, commensurate with its responsibilities arising from the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, has undertaken a series of actions focused on the following priority areas. First, in terms

of political and institutional reforms, and this is not an exhaustive list but I would like to underscore certain actions — and Mr. Ladsous touched on some of these in his own briefing — namely, the appointment, in January, of governors for the newly created regions of Taoudenni and Ménaka. I would also point out that, in March, a new governor was appointed for Kidal, which had been without state Government for approximately three years. I would like to make it clear that all three governors are from communities in northern Mali.

I also draw the Council's attention to the adoption by the Council of Ministers, on 24 February, of the draft bill and decree relating to the interim authorities called upon to manage the territorial collectivities, especially in the northern regions of Mali. I am pleased to announce that the National Assembly of Mali has just adopted, at its meeting on 31 March, the texts that were submitted by the Government. They are simply awaiting their enactment by the President and, above all, the appointment of the leadership of those interim authorities.

Allow me also to inform the Council that we have begun the constitutional review process by drawing up draft decrees and a timetable, especially to incorporate the provisions pertaining to the implementation of a second chamber, which is one of the key elements of the peace agreement.

There is also the issue of the holding of local and regional elections, which were postponed to foster a more inclusive approach. We hope the elections can be held as soon as possible, in particular following the establishment of the interim authorities and once the security situation on the ground has improved. We have also established and installed regional development agencies in all regions of Mali and in the district of Bamako.

Turning to the issue of defence and security, I draw members' attention to the effective establishment of bodies responsible for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as security sector reform initiatives. I also underscore the efforts undertaken by the Government of Mali to provide support for combatants from the signatory movements as a precursor to and during the effective start of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. I also refer to the identification of 24 sites to be prepared by MINUSMA and the start of construction on three other sites.

With regard to justice, national reconciliation and humanitarian efforts, I would like to note that basic social services have been relaunched in the north, where security conditions allow, with the cooperation of the Platform coalition of armed groups and the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad. In addition, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission has begun its work. In order to improve its inclusivity and increase the representation of the signatory groups, the Government of Mali has adopted a decree increasing the number of commissioners from 15 to 25.

I should also note that steps have been taken to further strengthen trust among the parties, including through the release of prisoners. Under-Secretary-General Ladsous also touched on the very important issue of trust, and I think that significant steps have been taken to genuinely improve the atmosphere of calm understanding among the parties in Mali, all of which are now in a position to speak with one voice and continue with their commitment to achieving the comprehensive and complete implementation of the peace agreement. Another crucial issue that Mr. Ladsous mentioned is the organization of a national reconciliation conference by the end of the year so as to enable us to implement the provisions of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation as soon as possible. With regard to the establishment of an international commission of inquiry, I should emphasize that as long ago as July 2014 the Government of Mali sent a letter to the Secretary-General, who informed the Human Rights Council. We are still awaiting a response from the Secretary-General on the issue.

With regard to the bodies monitoring the agreement, I would also like to note that the Agreement Monitoring Committee has held regular meetings whose inclusivity has greatly improved in the wake of the integration into subcommittees of all the agreement's signatory groups, testified to at the Committee's seventh meeting on 9 and 10 March, which through the collaborative efforts of the Malian parties was able to settle the issue of its entities' representativeness under articles 10 and 24 of its internal rules and to adopt a budget. I should also highlight the establishment of a national mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Peace Agreement through the creation of a national coordination committee for its implementation, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and is also open to the signatory groups and civil society.

There are various aspects that I should note in the area of social, cultural and economic development, the first of which are the continuing efforts to carry out development activities on the ground, where security conditions permit, including through sectoral programmes and projects. With regard to the joint evaluation mission to the north, the Government has already passed on its comments to the Monitoring Committee.

We should also welcome the setting up within the Ministry of Economy and Finance of a team responsible for defining the financial architecture of the sustainable development fund for Mali's northern regions, with initial funding of almost CFAF300 billion, about €457 million, for the period from 2016 to 2018, representing the Government of Mali's peace contribution. I should emphasize the substantial increase in the State budget allocations for the implementation of the peace agreement in 2016, in the amount of €25 million, about €16.4 billion more than the previous year. In addition, on 24 March we held sectoral consultations in Bamako on transport infrastructure in the north. All the projects presented that were subjected to feasibility studies have received funding pledges, and we are making progress on that front. At this point I must urge our technical and financial partners to honour the commitments they made at the international conference for Mali's recovery and development held in Paris in October 2015.

Unfortunately, the optimism generated by the signing of the agreement and the start of its implementation is now somewhat tempered owing to some persistent threats and challenges, at the centre of which are terrorism, drug trafficking and every form of organized crime in the Sahelo-Saharan region. That was the unanimous conclusion reached during the Security Council's visit to Mali and the MINUSMA strategic assessment. As Mr. Ladsous emphasized just now, this is because the criminal activities of both the terrorist groups and the drug traffickers are aimed indiscriminately at peaceful civilians, the Malian defence and security forces and the international forces of MINUSMA and France's Operation Barkhane. The threats now extend to several countries in West Africa and the Sahel, as was unfortunately demonstrated by the recent terrorist attacks in January in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and in March in Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire. I would like to reiterate to those nations and bereaved families the heartfelt condolences and solidarity of the people and the Government of Mali.

In combating terrorism, beyond our national efforts, we should place special emphasis on regional and international cooperation. Mali's defence and security forces are on the front lines of that fight. Sadly, they are still paying a heavy price, and we should commend their sacrifices and bravery. However, the complexity of the environment and the asymmetrical nature of the war mean that Mali's defence and security forces cannot cope with this threat, which concerns all of us, alone. They need support from their partners in logistics, intelligence and active cooperation aimed at strengthening their operational capacity for intervention on the ground. I should like to reiterate our appreciation to France for the Barkhane force's outstanding work in the fight against terrorism and for all the sacrifices it has made.

With regard to the mandatory, in fact essential, coordination of efforts to curb the recurring threats in West Africa and the Sahel, I would like to recall the initiatives of the Nouakchott Process and the Sahel Group of Five (G-5 Sahel), and to encourage the Security Council to support the operationalization of the G-5 Sahel intervention force, whose operating modalities were adopted on 4 March in N'Djamena at a meeting of the Group's Ministers of Defence. We also believe it is crucial to ensure that the international community can provide us with the necessary support for the establishment of an African Union intervention force for combating terrorism. In that regard, I welcome the recent African Union-United Nations joint assessment mission in Mali, whose conclusions, we hope, give new momentum to Africa's peace and security architecture, including the African Standby Force.

As the Security Council is aware, the region's general instability is related in large part to the continued deterioration of the political and security situation in Libya, which has direct consequences for the countries of the Sahel, including Mali. In that regard, we urge that the efforts to reach a political solution to the Libyan crisis continue. It is for that reason, which we share with the other States of the region, that my delegation is opposed to any kind of unilateral military intervention in our brother country of Libya. In that connection, I would like to remind the Council that the multidimensional crisis that rocked my country in 2012 followed the earlier military intervention in Libya.

With regard to the allegations of human rights violations mentioned in paragraph 31 of the Secretary-General's report, I would like to point out that

unfortunately the numbers cited do not enable us to distinguish the cases that may specifically be laid at the door of Mali's defence and security forces. With regard to the 265 detainees referred to in paragraph 32 of the report, checks carried out by our relevant services make it clear that the number bears no resemblance to the one available at the Ministry of Justice, which leads me again to invite MINUSMA to bring allegations of human rights violations to the Malian authorities within a reasonable time frame, in order to enable the Government of Mali to respond in a timely fashion.

Similarly, the observation in paragraph 36 of the report that

> "the Malian judicial authorities did not initiate criminal proceedings in relation to those human rights violations and abuses"

should, from our point of view, be tempered by the observation in paragraph 33 that

> "[m]ajor impediments to criminal proceedings included the lack of logistical resources for magistrates, insecurity preventing the judicial authorities from effectively carrying out investigations, especially in the north".

Faced with such obstacles, and as recommended by the Secretary-General, it is vital that the stabilization process be sped up through redeployment of the defence and security forces in northern Mali and that an environment more conducive to the implementation of the agreement be fostered.

Whatever the case, I would like to refer to paragraph 36 of the report and recall the nature of war crimes and crimes against humanity and the fact that there can be no amnesty for the perpetrators of those crimes, particularly crimes of sexual and other types of violence. Mali therefore reiterates its willingness to cooperate closely with all actors involved in the protection and defence of human rights. In the outline that I have just presented on the current situation, and in the light of the forthcoming renewal of MINUSMA's mandate, the Government of Mali would like to call to attention of the Security Council the need to make certain adjustments, first, with respect to adapting MINUSMA's mandate to the new security environment and, next, to speeding up the implementation process of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

Before concluding, I would like to strongly emphasize, as was done by the Secretary-General in his report, the need to speed up the implementation of the agreement as a whole, but in particular its provisions pertaining to political issues and security issues, which colour the proper execution of all other provisions of the agreement. Against that backdrop, and in the light of all that I have just said, it seems very clear that the Government of Mali has given strong impetus and taken significant steps towards the full implementation of the agreement. Such actions were publicly welcomed by the signatory movements to the agreement. The adoption, last week, of a law on interim authorities by the National Assembly is further eloquent proof.

The Government of Mali also believes that important and rapid progress is needed from the signatory movements on security issues, particularly by stepping up the process of cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the roll-out of joint patrols, and, as Under-Secretary-General Ladsous mentioned, by communicating the lists as soon as possible so that we can move forward in an area as sensitive as this one, that is to say, in a volatile security environment. Such measures will allow us to better pursue the recommendation of the Secretary-General directed to the Government that we strengthen the presence of the defence and security forces in the north so that, more broadly speaking, State authority may be extended throughout the national territory, in order for there to be better protection for persons and property. Such actions will also allow for the restoration of basic social services and create a more favourable environment for the peace process and for the activities of MINUSMA.

To that end, and in conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Government of Mali's determination to fully shoulder its responsibilities, and invite the Security Council to fully shoulder, in turn, its own responsibilities, namely, to get the parties, especially those that have not yet done so, to meet their commitments, and, most important, to step up the pace of change to allow us to stabilize Mali once and for all and strengthen peace and stability in the region, in the Sahel and hopefully well beyond.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the support that my country continues to enjoy from the Council, from the United Nations more generally and from the international community as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.